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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/674,700	09/29/2003	Yan Ye	8235/ETCH/DRIE/JB1	4579
44182	7590	10/05/2005	EXAMINER	
MOSER, PATTERSON & SHERIDAN, LLP APPLIED MATERIALS INC 595 SHREWSBURY AVE SUITE 100 SHREWSBURY, NJ 07702			UMEZ ERONINI, LYNETTE T	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			1765	
DATE MAILED: 10/05/2005				

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/674,700

Applicant(s)

YE ET AL.

Examiner

Lynette T. Umez-Eronini

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 29 September 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-28 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-28 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 29 September 2003 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 12/15/03.
- ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Objections

1. The numbering of claims is not in accordance with 37 CFR 1.126 which requires the original numbering of the claims to be preserved throughout the prosecution. When claims are canceled, the remaining claims must not be renumbered. When new claims are presented, they must be numbered consecutively beginning with the number next following the highest numbered claims previously presented (whether entered or not).

Misnumbered claims 23-29 have been renumbered 22-28.

It is noted that renumbered claims have been examined on the merits.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

2. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

3. Claims 13, 15, 19, 21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

In claim 15, line 2, "the organic layer;"

In claim 19, line 1, "the organic material;" and

In claim 21, line 2, "the organic layer" lacks antecedent basis.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

4. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

5. Claims 1, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 17, 18, 22-28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Dai et al. (US 5,935,762).

Dai discloses, "... forming dual damascene patterns using a silylation process. A substrate is provided with a tri-layer of insulation formed thereon. A first layer of silylation photoresist is formed on the substrate and is imaged with a hole pattern by exposure through a mask. Using a silylation process, ..., the regions in the first photoresist adjacent to the hole pattern are affixed to form top surface imaging mask. The hole pattern is then etched in the first photoresist. A second layer of photoresist is formed, and is imaged with a line pattern aligned with the previous hole pattern by exposure through a mask. The line pattern in the second photoresist is etched. The hole pattern in the first photoresist is transferred into the top layer of composite insulation first and then into the middle etch-stop layer by successive etching. The line pattern in the second photoresist layer is transferred into the first photoresist layer through a subsequent resist dry etching process. Finally, the line pattern and the hole pattern are transferred simultaneously into the top and lower layers of the composite insulation layer, respectively, through a final dry oxide etching. Having thus formed the

integral hole and line patterns into the insulation layer, metal is deposited into the dual damascene pattern. Any excess metal on the surface of the insulating layer is then removed by any number of ways including chemical-mechanical polishing, thereby planarizing the surface and readying it for the next semiconductor process" (Abstract).

The aforementioned reads on,

A method of fabricating an interconnect structure, comprising:

(a) providing a substrate having a film stack formed thereon;

b) patterning and etching a first feature in the film stack;

(c) forming a bi-layer mask comprising an organic film and an imaging film on the film stack;

(d) patterning the bi-layer mask;

(e) etching a second feature in the film stack using the patterned bi-layer mask as an etch mask; and

(f) metallizing the first and second features to form the interconnect structure, **in claims 1, 22, 28; and 28;**

wherein the first barrier layer comprises at least one of silicon dioxide (SiO_2) and silicon nitride (Si_3N_4), **in claim 6;**

wherein the first feature is a trench and the second feature is a contact hole, **in claim 9;**

wherein the first feature is a contact hole and the second feature is a trench, **in claim 10;**

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wherein the first feature is formed by patterning and etching a trench in the film stack to a pre-determined depth, **claim 11**;

wherein the second feature is formed by patterning a contact hole in the bi-layer mask, **in claim 12**;

wherein the first feature is formed by patterning and etching a contact hole in the film stack to a predetermined depth, **in claim 17**;

wherein the second feature is formed by patterning a trench in the bi-layer mask, **in claim 18**;

wherein the trench is etched to a predetermined depth in the film stack, **in claim 23**; and

wherein the contact hole is etched to a predetermined depth in the film stack, **in claim 26**.

Since Dai uses the same method of forming an interconnecting structure as claimed by applicants, then using Dai's method in the same manner as claimed by applicants would inherently result wherein the step (e) further comprises: using a portion of the organic film in the trench as an etch mask so as to remove lithographic misalignment between the contact hole and the trench when the contact hole is etched, in claims **13, 24, and 27**.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

6. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

7. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

8. Claims 2-5, 7, 8, 13, 14, 15, 19, 20, and 21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dai (US 762) as applied to claims 1, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 17, and 18 above, and further in view of Chen et al. (US 6,809,028 B2).

Dai differs in failing to disclose the specific film stack and materials that comprise the capping, sacrificial, first dielectric, second dielectric, first barrier, second barrier, and metal layer as specified in the following:

wherein the film stack comprises a first barrier layer, a conductive layer embedded in a first dielectric layer, a second barrier layer and a second dielectric layer,
in claim 2;

wherein at least one of a capping layer and a sacrificial layer is formed on the second dielectric layer, **in claim 3**;

wherein the sacrificial layer comprises at least one of amorphous silicon, titanium nitride (TiN) and tungsten (W), **in claim 4**.

wherein the first dielectric layer and the second dielectric layer each comprise at least one of carbon doped silicon oxide, organic doped silicon glass and fluorine doped silicon glass, **in claim 5**;

wherein the second barrier layer comprises silicon carbide (SiC), **in claim 7**.

wherein the conductive layer comprises at least one of copper (Cu), aluminum (Al), tantalum (Ta), tungsten (W), titanium (Ti), tantalum nitride (TaN) and titanium nitride (TiN), **in claim 8**;

wherein the step (e) further comprises: using a portion of the organic film in the trench as an etch mask so as to remove lithographic misalignment between the contact hole and the trench when the contact hole is etched, **in claim 13**; and

wherein a portion of the organic material in the contact hole is used as an etch mask when the trench is formed in the film stack, **in claim 19**.

Chen teaches fabricating dual damascene copper by providing a semiconductor substrate **20** with a first insulating layer **21** (same as applicants' first barrier layer) over the substrate **20**;; followed by a patterning copper interconnection wiring **23** in an embedded second insulating layer **22** (same as applicants' first insulating layer), which overlies insulating layer **21**; then depositing an etch stop layer **24** (same as applicants' second barrier layer) over insulating layer **22** and copper wiring **23**; and forming a third

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insulating layer **25** (same as applicants' second insulating layer) over layer **24** (column 4, lines 2-32 and **FIGS. 2A-2E**). Chen also teaches using dielectric insulators such as fluorinated silicate glass and Xerogels (column 2, lines 41-51) and etch-stop layers (same as applicants' barrier layer) such as SiN and SiC (column 3, lines 4, lines 18-20).

Since Chen illustrates interconnecting structures comprising stacked layers and materials comprising the capping, sacrificial, first dielectric, second dielectric, first barrier, second barrier, and metal layer are known, then it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the claimed invention to employ such materials to accomplish the claimed invention for the purpose of improving the method of making semiconductor devices (Chen, column 1, lines 8-10).

Dai also differs in failing to teach wherein step (b) comprises: etching the trench in the film stack comprising a dielectric material to a pre-determined depth by providing carbon tetrafluoride (CF₄) and nitrogen (N₂) at a CF₄:N₂ flow ratio in a range from 1:4 to 2:3, **in claim 14**;

wherein step (e) comprises: etching the contact hole in the organic layer to a pre-determined depth by providing ammonia (NH₃) and oxygen (O₂) at a flow ratio NH₃:O₂ in a range from 1:1 to 100 percent ammonia, **in claim 15**;

etching the hole in the film stack comprising a dielectric material to a pre-determined depth by providing carbon tetrafluoride (CF₄) and nitrogen (N₂) at a CF₄:N₂ flow ratio in a range from 1:4 to 2:3, **in claim 20**; and

wherein step (e) comprises: etching the trench in the organic layer to a pre-determined depth by providing ammonia (NH_3) and oxygen (O_2) at a flow ratio $\text{NH}_3:\text{O}_2$ in a range from 1:1 to 100 percent ammonia, **in claim 21**.

Chen teaches the insulating layer is reactive ion etched by a process chemistry selected from the group of gases comprised of CF_4 and is combined with ambient gas mixtures selected from the group comprised of O_2 and N_2 (column 4, lines 39-45).

Since Chen illustrates the specific combination of CF_4 and N_2 and also NH_3 and O_2 etchants is known, then it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the claimed invention to select any flow ratio of CF_4 and N_2 as well as select any percent ratio of $\text{NH}_3:\text{O}_2$ in the Chen reference that would effectively accomplish the disclosed composition because it has been held that there is no invention where the difference in proportions is not critical and was ascertained by routine experimentation because the determination of workable ranges is not considered inventive. See *In re Swain and Adams*, 70 USPQ 412 (CPA 1946).

9. Claim 16 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dai (US '569) as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Hopper (US 6,576,545 B1).

Dai differs in failing to teach a step comprising a step of planarizing the metallized interconnect structure to remove the sacrificial layer and at least a portion of the capping layer.

Hopper teaches removing a barrier layer (same as applicants' sacrificial layer) in a trench/via structure that is filled with a conductive metal is removed by chemical

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mechanical polishing to form a device with dual damascene interconnect (column 9, line 11-17).

Since Hopper illustrates planarizing a metal layer along with a barrier layer is known, then it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the claimed invention to use a known method of planarizing a conductive structure as taught by Hopper for the purpose of removing excess conductive material in completing the damascene structure (Hopper, column 9, lines 14-17).

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Lynette T. Umez-Eronini whose telephone number is 571-272-1470. The examiner is normally unavailable on the First Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Nadine Norton can be reached on 571-272-1465. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.


Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

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September 30, 2005


SHAMIM AHMED
Primary Examiner
AU 1765